



WTO Newsletter

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Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, in his [report](#) (Download in Word format, 3 pages, 44 KB) to the General Council meeting on 10-13 December 2002 as Chairman of the Trade Negotiations Committee, said that "we have made progress on all fronts, but in an uneven way, and perhaps not as quickly as we needed to". He stressed that "we definitely cannot afford to go to Cancun with an overloaded agenda and with too many unresolved issues".

Regarding future TNC meetings, Dr. Supachai said that he was looking at ways on engendering "a more interactive type of discussion at our meetings, turning general statements into more specific ones, with the aim of clarifying positions and moving towards convergence".

Regarding outstanding implementation issues considered by nine WTO bodies during the course of the year pursuant to the Doha Ministerial Declaration, the Director-General said that "despite all the hard work that had been done, members did not seem to have reached agreement on definitive solutions on most the issues before them". He said he would consult informally on possible next steps.

> [Summary of TNC meeting](#) (Download in Word format, 2 pages, 30 KB)

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## [Overview of the trading environment](#) [back to top](#)



The General Council, on 11 December 2002, met as the Trade Policy Review Body to conduct the annual overview of developments in international trade and the trading environment required under the Trade Policy Review Mechanism.

Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi, in his first annual report to members on developments in the international trading environment released on 15 November 2002, underlined the economic benefits of successful market-access negotiations in both goods and services, especially to developing countries. Serious obstacles to trade, he said, remain in agriculture, textiles and other manufactures.

> [Annual report by the Director-General](#) (Download in Word format, 46 pages, 628 KB)

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The Director-General, in a [speech](#) (The Doha Development Agenda: Challenges Ahead) on 26 November 2002 during a conference on globalization at the University of Leuven, Belgium said that “uncertainty in the world economy, combined with growing international tension, has overshadowed the new Round and weakened the cause of multilateral cooperation – yet this is precisely why the WTO's success (in Cancún) is so vital”.

In his [keynote address](#) (Agriculture and the Doha Development Agenda) to the World Food and Farming Congress in London on 25 November 2002, said that along with textiles and a few other sectors, “trade liberalization in agriculture is probably the single most important contribution the multilateral trading system can make to help developing countries, including the poorest among them, to trade their way out of poverty”.

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## [General Council approves accession of Armenia](#) [back to top](#)



The WTO's General Council, on 10 December 2002, approved the accession package of Armenia to the World Trade Organization. Director-General Supachai said that “this is a very significant event for Armenia and for the multilateral trading system”.

> [Press release](#)

Earlier, member governments approved guidelines which should facilitate the integration of the world's poorest countries into the global economy by streamlining their accession procedures into the WTO. The Director-General said “the decision represents a major breakthrough and substantively contributes to facilitating the accession of LDCs to the WTO”.

> [Press release](#)

Meanwhile, Cambodia's bid to join the WTO has moved into a final phase following a meeting of its WTO Accession Working Party on 14 November 2002. The Secretariat has been asked to draft the working party's report in time for a meeting in the spring of 2003. Cambodia and WTO members in the working party said they aim to complete the membership deal by the Fifth WTO Ministerial Conference in Cancún, 10-14 September 2003.

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At its December meeting, the General Council approved a range of measures, including streamlined WTO accession for the world's poorest countries and greater clarity in the selection of future directors-general and chairpersons for WTO councils and committees.

> [Press release](#)

The General Council approved a new budget which includes salary adjustments and a commitment to further work on a more permanent method of calculating salaries. Chairperson Sergio Marchi described elements of "an objective and credible process" for achieving a fair outcome. [Statements](#) were also made by Director-General Supachai Panitchpakdi and the WTO Staff Council.

> [Summary of the meeting](#) (Download in Word format, 4 pages, 43 KB)

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### WTO reviews trade policies of Hong Kong, China; Venezuela; and Japan [back to top](#)

WTO members concluded their review of trade policies of Hong Kong, China; Venezuela; and Japan on 8 November, 29 November and 18 December, respectively.

They commended Hong Kong, China for maintaining one of the most open economies in the world, one which many members should seek to emulate. They congratulated Hong Kong, China for its active role in the WTO, including its strong support for the Doha Development Agenda.

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Members said that Venezuela's growing reliance on the petroleum sector has resulted in a narrow export base and eroded the competitiveness of other sectors. They encouraged Venezuela's ongoing efforts to diversify its export markets and products.

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Members encouraged Japan to press ahead with reforms, through, among other things, further financial and corporate restructuring, improved market access (particularly in agriculture) and stronger competition policy. They underlined the importance of Japan's economic health for the world economy, and its leadership in the WTO.

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### US given more time to implement "hot-rolled steel" ruling [back to top](#)



The Dispute Settlement Body (DSB), on 5 December 2002, agreed to extend the reasonable period of time by which the United States must implement the DSB's rulings and recommendations in the case concerning its antidumping measures on certain hot-rolled steel products from Japan. Meanwhile, on 28 November 2002, Ecuador and Turkey announced that they had found a mutually agreed solution in their dispute concerning bananas and certain fruits.

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The WTO issued reports on the following cases:

- The Appellate Body, on 9 December 2002, issued its report (DS212/AB/R), which reversed the Panel's conclusion that the relevant internal United States legislation is inconsistent with the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, but upheld the Panel's finding that the United States had acted inconsistently with that Agreement by imposing and maintaining countervailing measures on steel products from privatized steel companies in the European Communities without determining whether subsidies continued to exist. Mr. James Bacchus, Chairman of the Appellate Body, has sent a letter to the Chairman of the Dispute Settlement Body, regarding the effect of the work-to-rule action by the WTO Secretariat on the distribution of this report. Download the Appellate Body report in [Word format](#) (78 pages; 333KB), in [pdf format](#) (78 pages; 207KB)

- The WTO issued, on 29 November 2002, the report of a panel (DS141/RW) that found the EC to have implemented a previous recommendation to bring its anti-dumping duties on imports of cotton-type bed linen from India into conformity with the Anti-Dumping Agreement. [Download the panel report](#)
- The WTO issued, on 28 November 2002, the report of the Appellate Body (DS213/AB/R) regarding the panel report on the EC complaint, against the US, relating to a sunset review of countervailing duties on certain corrosion-resistant carbon steel flat products from Germany. [Download the Appellate Body report](#)

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## [Twenty-first and twenty-second regular Trade Policy Courses come to a close](#) [back to top](#)



Two three-month courses held in parallel at the WTO concluded on 6 December 2002, providing 58 trade officials from developing and least-developed countries a better understanding of the WTO Agreements and trade-related topics. Presiding over a joint diploma ceremony on behalf of the Director-General, Deputy Director-General Rufus Yerxa reminded participants that “knowledge is power, but knowledge is also responsibility”.

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The WTO’s technical assistance programme on Trade and Investment continued on 1-2 December 2002 with a special workshop for capital-based officials from 21 African countries. The Workshop has been organised by the WTO Secretariat in cooperation with UNCTAD, and with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

> [Press release](#)

Twenty-one government officials from least-developed countries participated in the Second Introduction Course on WTO, which started on 11 November 2002. The WTO Training Institute conducted the three-week course in French.

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